Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 13, with the following rewritten paragraph:

With continued reference to FIGS. 1, 2, and 3, the autostainer 10 includes an X-Y-Z robotic delivery system 22 that is capable of delivering bulk reagents, small supply reagents, buffer solutions, and air to the tissue specimens on the slides 12. The X-Y-Z robotic delivery system 22 includes a Z-head 24 that is controllably and selectively movable on a pair of linear motion assemblies, indicated generally by reference numerals 26a and 26b to any position in a horizontal X-Y plane. The Z-head 24 carries a vertically disposed probe 38, which is selectively and controllably movable up and down in a vertical, or Z, direction. An exemplary X-Y-Z robotic delivery system, similar to delivery system 22, is described in commonly-assigned U.S. Patent Number 5,839,091 and in copending, commonly assigned U.S. Patent Application Serial Number [[09/483,148]] 09/483,248, filed on [[January 4, 2000]] January 14, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,746,851 and entitled "Method and Apparatus for Automatic Tissue Staining," the disclosure of each being expressly incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The autostainer control system 28 implements software that accepts and effectuates a series of process steps or staining protocol for staining the tissue specimen mounted on each slide 12. The autostainer 10 optimizes the order of protocol execution and executes the staining protocols by providing a series of instructions to the robotic delivery system 22. The execution may be paused to add slides 12 carrying prioritized or "stat" tissue specimens to the slide racks 20 and to integrate their staining protocols with the staining protocols of the slides 12 pending when the staining process was paused. Such protocol programming is described in U.S. Patent Number 5,839,091 and Patent Application Serial Number [[09/483,148]] 09/483,248, now U.S. Patent No. 6,746,851, incorporated by reference above, and in commonly assigned U.S. Patent Application Serial Number [[ ]] 10/010,830, now U.S. Patent No. 6,735,531 , entitled "Method and Apparatus for Automatic Tissue Staining," which is expressly incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.